

California Department of Agriculture

Listening Session

Escondido, CA • July 8, 2008

Thank you Dept of Ag for asking visionary questions and thank you for listening.

Vision of California agriculture 2030

Ecological wisdom • Social justice

Ecosystem view – closed system, toxins and pollutants don't go away

We want a healthy productive system – need healthy inputs, environmental and social

Productivity <<< Cultivate rich, healthy soil and healthy social systems to support food production

Grow beyond organic – truly sustainable

Local production and distribution system

Social justice

Access to fresh, healthy foods without pesticides

Freedom from GMEs – freedom from genetic pollution

Farm workers – decent working conditions, freedom from pesticides and poisons, treated with respect, institute a legal guest worker program

Respect for the commonwealth – access to community garden space

Highest and best use of river valleys and fertile land is sustainable agriculture—not development

Government plays an important role – Develop legislation, zoning ordinances, tax incentives—create a system of ecological wisdom and social justice – makes good long-term economic sense

Biggest challenges in achieving that vision

Government subsidizing the wrong things – unsustainable, chemical-dependent, toxic agriculture

We should be taxing petroleum-based pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers!

People duped by the myths of industrialized agriculture and our “free-market” economy

Government should subsidize the right things – tax relief for organic sustainable farms, include sustainable ag research and development, localize food systems, create agricultural preserves—highest and best use for good ag land is growing food, support community gardens, plan urban areas with local food production as a top priority, promote education, kids should experience nature and school gardens

Move people and market toward economic and environmental sustainability

NGOs are currently doing what government should be doing!

Government should serve all the people, not benefit the wealthy few at the expense of the rest of us and the environment

Public perception of California agriculture 2030

Ecosystem view – we are part of an ecosystem

Understand relationships between food (production and consumption) and health—personal, public, and environmental

Public join more in the production, not just consumption

Create neighborhood farms and gardens

OR

We could continue on our current path of corporate dominance

People continue to live and eat disconnected from the source of good, healthy food

Epidemic obesity, diabetes, heart disease continues

Public perception of agriculture—continued disconnect, agriculture is not part of my life

Film suggestion: “Idiocracy”

“Must have” to achieve vision

Wisdom and courage – government and the people

Wisdom to see the connections between food—how we grow it and how we eat it—and our personal, public, and environmental health

Wisdom to recognize that our food shouldn’t kill us!

Wisdom to craft public policy that promotes excellent health, not just excellent corporate profits

Courage to lead for the highest purpose and the greatest good

We can not keep farming and eating the way we do

We can not sustain irresponsible use of chemical pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, GMEs

We can not allow corporations to write our legislation

We need the courage to do the right thing and create an agricultural system that is sustainable environmentally and socially

Let’s return to **vision** – vision for now and the future

Feeding people with locally-grown food – grown in the community, by the community, for the community

San Diego Roots Sustainable Food Project

Organic Farm and Educational Center (show model)

www.sandiegoroots.org

Nancy Owens Renner